

CONNEXUS

A Magazine for Alberta Government Managers

Spring 2001 Edition

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PLUS MUCH MORE . . .

Photo pointing to page 5 courtesy
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Landmark Law...

A Worldwide First

Through the Protection of Children Involved in Prostitution (PChIP) Act, Children's Services is taking an innovative approach to helping youth involved in prostitution and to changing societal perceptions of sexually exploited young people.

To support government's commitment, Children's Services and Justice worked together to develop and implement this unique legislation and its accompanying programs and services.

"We felt it was critical that our legislation clearly acknowledge, for the first time, that children involved in prostitution are victims of sexual abuse — not criminals and not willing participants in this sexual exploitation. We wanted to change how this issue was viewed and to provide a better alternative to charging these children with solicitation. Then, we could take the next step — providing help and support," said Children's Services Deputy Minister Paula Tyler.

"In response to this need and with the help of other ministries, children and families, police, social workers, child and family services authorities, the

aboriginal community, service providers and community members at large, we developed this highly responsive legislation," she added.

Margaret Unsworth, a lawyer with the Constitutional and Aboriginal Branch of Justice, said: "Having the ability, by law, to apprehend and confine these children was critical. This important legal avenue was needed to better support them."

Under the Act, police and social workers can apprehend children

engaging in prostitution or attempting to engage in prostitution — with a court order or without a court order in emergency situations. After they are apprehended, these children can be confined to a protective safe house and assessed, returned to a parent/guardian or

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Children's Services Deputy Minister Paula Tyler

"Children's Services and Justice worked together to develop and implement this unique legislation..."

CONNEXUS

is published in print and online by the Personnel Administration Office. Its purpose is to keep managers in the Alberta public service informed about current policies, goals and programs.

It serves to provide managers with information to assist in their individual development and that of the Alberta public service.

The views expressed in **CONNEXUS** are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Personnel Administration Office, nor does publishing them imply endorsement. The editorial policy for this magazine is set out in a document approved by the Public Service Commissioner. A copy can be obtained from the Editor.

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Landmark Law... *continued*

released, if older than 16 years and able to provide for their own needs. Recent amendments to the Act provide for an initial confinement period of up to five days and two additional confinement periods of up to 21 days each. Confinement at a protective safe house helps a child break the cycle of abuse and begin the recovery process in a safe, secure environment.

Children ending their involvement in prostitution have access to a range of support services such as addiction treatment programs, counselling and health care. These services are provided through child and family services authorities, which work with community members, local service providers and other government departments to develop services specific to the needs of local children and families.

"It's heartening to know that we've positively changed a child's life with the help of this legislation,..."

The result? More than 400 apprehensions have occurred since the Act's inception in February 1999. These apprehensions have involved approximately 200 individuals with more than 80 of them being apprehended more than once.

"We are making a difference through the PCHIP Act. Police tell us there are fewer children on the streets now and likely fewer adults out there in the future because of our early intervention. Many of the children apprehended have taken steps to start a new life and tell us they appreciate the support

received. It's heartening to know that we've positively changed a child's life with the help of this legislation," Tyler said.

Unsworth added: "From a legal perspective, this groundbreaking legislation has been endorsed by the courts, confirming our approach. Apprehension and confinement are legally appropriate when necessary to ensure a child's safety and protection. We can protect their rights and, at the same time, ensure they receive the help needed to break the cycle of abuse." ■



Justice Constitutional and Aboriginal Branch Lawyer Margaret Unsworth

Feeling Good...

APS Job Satisfaction Up Again

For the third year in a row, a survey of Alberta government employees shows an increasing level of job satisfaction.

In the most recent polling, 85 per cent reported that they were satisfied in their work. That marks a dramatic 17 per cent increase since 1997—when only 68 per cent expressed satisfaction with their jobs—and a five per cent increase since 1999.

The 2000 results are based on a telephone survey of 4,408 employees, about 24 per cent of the workforce, conducted between October and December by Research Innovations Inc., an independent Alberta consulting firm.

Here are some questions and responses from the polling:

- You have the skills and knowledge to meet the current requirements of your job. Ninety-seven per cent agree.
- You keep yourself informed about changes to your job or work environment. Ninety-three per cent agree.
- You have the skills and knowledge to meet the anticipated requirements of your job over the next three years. Eighty-six per cent agree.
- You know and understand how your work contributes to the achievement of your department business plan. Seventy-eight per cent agree.
- You have acquired or developed the knowledge and skills over the past two years which have made you more competitive in the job market. Seventy-eight per cent agree.

- You know and understand how the work of your department contributes to government business plan goals. Seventy-one per cent agree.

When supervisors were asked the same questions on how they viewed the employees they supervise, the results were similar, suggesting comparable opinions exist from both perspectives.

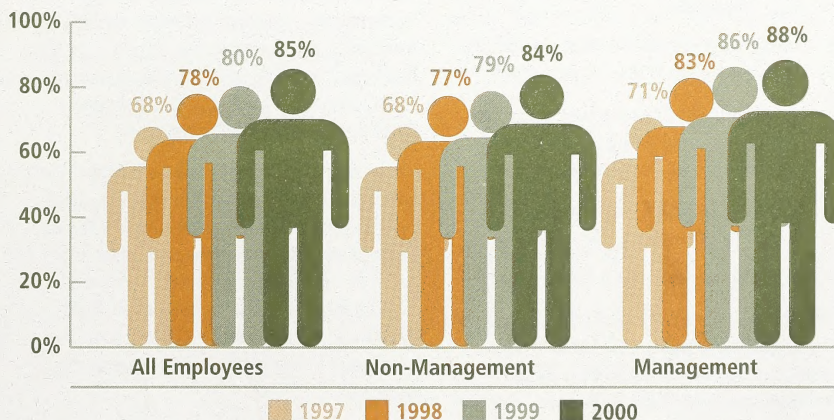
In terms of their organization's performance, employees generally identified two areas with the greatest room for improvement — recognizing employees for their contribution to progress on business goals and asking for input when planning business improvements.

The latest findings encompass a wide-range of questions and answers and each department has been given its specific ministry results from Research Innovations Inc.

The employee opinion poll originated in 1996 when the Personnel Administration Office, deputy ministers and human resource directors from across government developed a corporate human resource development strategy.

As part of the strategy, core measures of employee satisfaction were established and annual surveys commissioned to obtain and assess employees' views on those measures. ■

"The survey results serve as a corporate barometer, which departments can use to assess their corporate human resource strategy progress."



The Heart of the Matter...

Superior Service an ACSC Priority

CORPORATE SERVICE CENTRE
INITIATIVE SHARED SERVICES INITIATIVE

Let's face it, customer service is the single most important factor in determining which companies will be winners and which ones will struggle now and for the foreseeable future. At the Alberta Corporate Service Centre (ACSC) getting to the heart of customer service is a priority and we are rising to the challenge by taking the proper steps to becoming a provider of superior service.

"We're working hard at developing a customer service plan that delivers what our customers really want and responds to the needs of those providing the service—our employees," says ACSC CEO Dave Rehill. According to Rehill, creating a plan that captures the essence of customer satisfaction is the goal. And a six-step process to getting there is how his organization is tackling this major undertaking by:

- conducting an assessment of current service practices and demands and identifying how to best respond to the needs and wants of our customers in order to meet and exceed their service expectations
- setting an ACSC vision, mission and performance measures that focus on our customers
- developing customer service principles with employee and customer input
- establishing processes that guide our employees in aligning their customer service with our service principles
- creating feedback mechanisms involving customers, and
- striving for continuous improvement.

Rehill can't stress enough that Step 1 is the key to getting it right. "We knew it was important to take the time to perform a thorough analysis of our customers' satisfac-

tion with the current services and products provided. Over the past few months, we have been busy asking a lot of questions of a lot of people."

"We want the ACSC to be recognized as an organization that does a whole lot right and at the same time is constantly seeking ways to do things better."

The ACSC reviewed various forms of market research; conducted a customer service practices survey, directed at team leaders and acting heads; examined customer service strategies, by holding a Becoming a High Performance Customer Focused Organization workshop with our executive directors, acting heads and business process re-engineering team leaders; and held customer service focus groups with ACSC employees.

These activities are helping us better understand what motivates our customers, drives their loyalty and ultimately satisfies them. The research is also giving us insight into how our employees currently incorporate customer service practices in their daily decisions, actions and behaviors; how they are doing; and how they see they can improve.

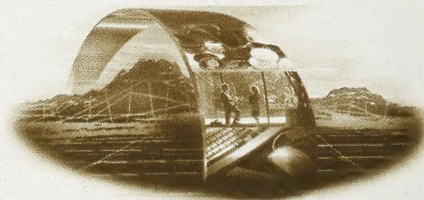
The next step is to develop a service vision or theme and finalize our draft customer service principles that will provide a foundation for a unified approach to delivering quality service. Once approved, these service principles will allow the ACSC to function around a single purpose and the theme will aid in promotion.

"We will once again turn to employees and customers as a valuable resource when tackling this important step," says Rehill. "We want a customer service vision that tunes our organization for maximum performance and strives to be a winner."

Dave is not alone in his focus on the ACSC customer service plan. The deputy ministers' steering committee strongly agrees that the value of good customer service at the ACSC rests with everyone playing a vital role in establishing and maintaining the ACSC as a first-class service organization.

Says Eric McGhan, chair of the deputy ministers' steering committee that guides the shared services initiative: "We want the ACSC to be recognized as an organization that does a whole lot right and at the same time is constantly seeking ways to do things better. We need to not only ensure that ACSC's service delivery practices are 100 per cent customer focused but are designed to adapt to change that meets and exceeds customer needs, desires and expectations."

"I am confident that our plan will truly capture the heart of customer service," says Rehill. Why? "Because it is a collaborative effort between our employees, customers, partners and stakeholders." ■



An Ounce of Prevention...

Organizing a Cure

They say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

That's the philosophy Alberta Health and Wellness followed in launching the largest-ever immunization program within our borders. Provincial Health Officer Dr. John Waters authorized the campaign in early February as a proactive, preventative measure to guard against the spread of meningococcal disease.

"We had an extensive debrief after the Edmonton campaign with the intent of learning from our experience," said Deputy Provincial Health Officer Karen Grimsrud. "And we learned what worked well as well as what didn't."

Alberta Health and Wellness put this experience into action. For example, due to the success of the Edmonton meningitis call centre in providing timely, accurate information to the public, the ministry coordinated a similar province-wide call centre through the Public Affairs Bureau in February. The Calgary Regional Health Authority also established a local centre in Calgary, the initial focus area for the campaign.

To date, the call centres have received over 10,000 calls and continue to provide the public with accurate details about the disease and the immunization program.



Deputy Provincial Health Officer Dr. Karen Grimsrud

"We have been extremely pleased with the success of the call centres," said Grimsrud. "They not only provide valuable information to the public, but they also play an important role in calming fears."

Another example of where the Edmonton campaign provided a valuable source of learning was in the area of logistics. The campaign provided information about how much vaccine and supplies were needed, crowd control measures and even the number of doses a nurse could administer during a day.

With the Edmonton learning experience, Alberta Health and Wellness also had the opportunity to improve its communication. Physicians were identified during the debrief as a key audience who would have benefited from more detailed information at the start of the campaign. As a result, during the province-wide launch physicians received a letter from Dr. Waters addressing their unique concerns and potential questions.

"In this case—no news was good news," explained Grimsrud. "Since the February announcement we've responded to a few physicians, but otherwise it's been very quiet."



Provincial Health Officer Dr. John Waters

As with any public health campaign the role of the media is crucial. And one of the successes from the Edmonton campaign was the media's access to an immunization clinic. The same held true for the recent campaign in Calgary.

On the day the Calgary campaign began, media had access to a class at a designated high school and continued to provide extensive coverage throughout the campaign.

"The media has been very cooperative," said David Bray of Health and Wellness communications. "By helping to coordinate access for them, they have communicated our public health messages to a much wider audience."

As of our publishing deadline, the Calgary campaign had already reached almost 90 per cent of students in high school and around 66 per cent in post-secondary institutions.

The province-wide meningitis campaign will swing into full gear in April as it delivers an ounce of prevention to between 500,000 to 700,000 young people. ■

"To date, the call centres have received over 10,000 calls and continue to provide the public with accurate details about the disease and the immunization program."

Alberta Connects

Health and Wellness coordinated a province-wide call centre through the Public Affairs Bureau to handle thousands of information requests about its mass immunization program.



Web Knowledge...

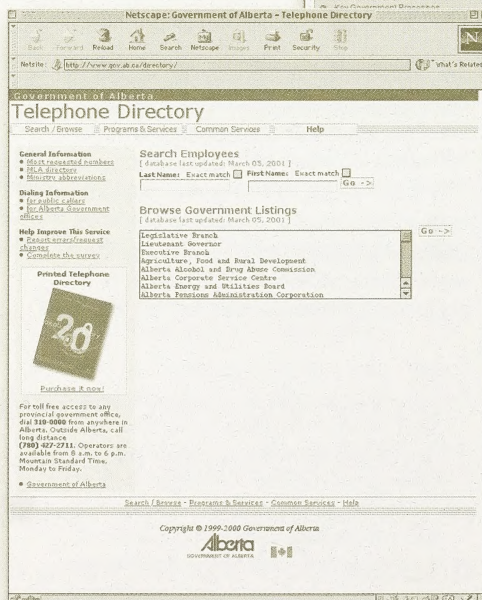
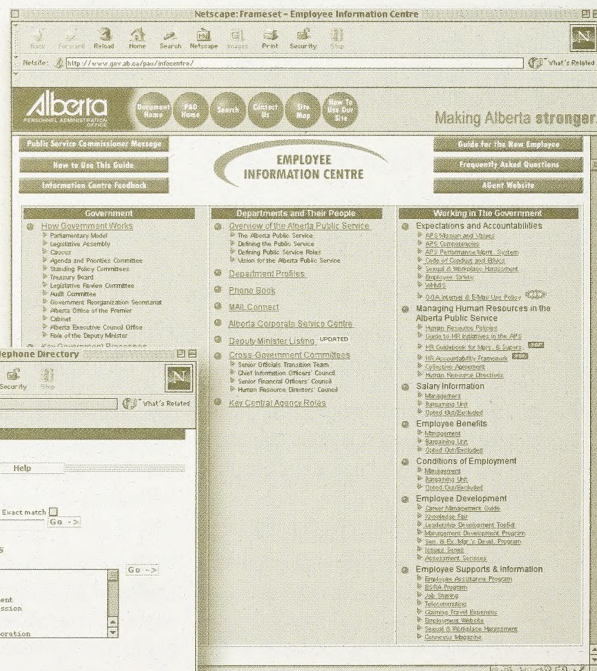
An employee's guide to working in the Alberta government

The Employee Information Centre includes information and links to:

- How Government Works
- Overview of the Alberta Public Service
- Department Profiles
- Salary Information
- Employee Benefits
- Conditions of Employment
- Employee Development

and much more - bookmark it and visit it often!

www.gov.ab.ca/pao/infocentre



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ExClaim!!!

Empowers Employees, Streamlines Process

The endless possibilities of AGent are fast becoming realities with the introduction of another employee self-service tool. ExClaim, a new online expense claim system, will mean empowered employees taking charge of their own expense claim processing, without intervention and in keeping with proper business procedures.

"ExClaim is designed to eliminate duplication of effort and bottlenecks associated with paper based expense claim processing. It also supports the Alberta public service as one employer with more standardized

government processes, policies and business practices—creating more efficiency, more accuracy and reduced costs," said ExClaim Project Manager Rob Schneider.

What will ExClaim mean for you?

ExClaim ultimately means you are empowered to take charge of your own expense claim processing, without paper, without intervention and in keeping with business rules and regulations. ExClaim benefits include:

- convenient access to all your expense claim information, including the ability to track the status of your claims, from the office, home or any other location using the Internet
- improved accuracy because you will manage your own expense claim data
- more efficient processing of expense claims resulting in quicker reimbursement
- fair and consistent application of business rules—ExClaim helps you complete your expense claims by pre-filling information about account codes and GST, automatically generating claims for meals while on a trip, calculating mileage claims, etc.

- a history of your expense claims enabling you to duplicate and quickly edit a prior claim when expenses recur, and
- for convenience and security, you will use the same government of Alberta username and password used to access other AGent tools such as My Employment Information.

Three ministries began piloting ExClaim in January while others are scheduled to start implementation in April 2001.

For more information, please see the AGent portal (www.agent.gov.ab.ca) or contact your ExClaim ministry coordinator. A list of these individuals is on the AGent portal—click More about Exclaim followed by Who is Involved.

Who does it affect?

ExClaim's primary users will be about 15,000 Alberta public service employees who regularly submit expense claims, as well as any support staff affected by the change. Other claimants who are not members of the Alberta public service such as board members and contractors will also use ExClaim.

AGent
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Employee Net



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Spring 2001 Edition

Upcoming...

EXPLORING THE E-FRONTIER

In a world dominated by instant communications, advanced computer technology and perception equaling reality, knowledge is a powerful and valuable commodity.

Exploring ways to manage our knowledge and provide policy context for the knowledge society is what this year's Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) national conference is all about. From May 6 to 9 in Edmonton's Shaw Conference Centre, hundreds of participants from across Canada will be Exploring the E-Frontier—defining a knowledge society and then exploring skillsets and mindsets of public servants in such a society.

Organizers have developed an ambitious program. In plenary and concurrent sessions, panel forums and informal meetings, delegates will discuss such

topics as the changing role of government in the knowledge society, the effects of the digital divide and changing ideas of privacy.

Speakers include Mel Cappe, clerk of the Privy Council and secretary to the federal cabinet; Taiaiake Alfred, director of indigenous governance programs at the University of Victoria; and the CBC's Rex Murphy.

Media will be well represented on the program by Giles Gherson, Edmonton Journal; Jeff Simpson, Globe and Mail; and Jill Vardy, National Post.

Justice Deputy Minister Paul Bourque is conference co-chair, as well as a speaker. Innovation and Science Deputy Minister Roger Palmer and Learning Deputy Minister Maria David Evans are also featured participants.

The program will be liberally mixed with social events with plenty of opportunities to share experiences with colleagues from across the country.

For more information on the program and to register, please visit the IPAC 2001 conference Web site at www.ipaciapc2001.com ■

EXPLORING THE E-FRONTIER
Public administration
in a knowledge
society

EXPLOREZ L'E-FRONTIER
La gestion
publique dans
la société
du savoir

www.ipaciapc2001.com
EDMONTON



**MAY
6-9
MAI
2001**

"Exploring the E-Frontier—defining a knowledge society and then exploring skillsets and mindsets of public servants in such a society"



Premier's Awards...

The annual Premier's Awards of Excellence ceremony is planned for mid-June at the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. Once the date has been confirmed departments will be notified.



Switching #s...

On March 12, 2001, the Personnel Administration Office switched its telephone system from Meridian to Centrex. PAO's new main switchboard number is now 780-408-8400.

780-408-8400

To change your mailing label address, please correct and return it to the payroll area of your department's human resources office for update in the IMAGIS database.